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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

18 April 1951

MEMORANDUM FOR MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL GROUP

FROM: Mr. Matthias

SUBJECT: Preliminary Report on Plans

The enclosed paper is a preliminary, almost personal, report incorporating thoughts of various members of the group. It is not put forward as complete, well thought through presentation, but as basis for discussion at the General Group meeting scheduled for 1:00 p.m. Thursday, April 19.

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I. TYPES AND LEVELS OF ESTIMATES

1. In almost six months of operation we have had ample opportunity to become confused over our mission. It is clear that we take on jobs handed to us by the DCI and the IAC, but it has been obvious to all that O/NE has been dealt a highly heterogeneous group of problems. If there is any rationale for the work of O/NE, it certainly isn't clear to the staff.

2. It should be admitted, of course, that O/NE ought to make the estimates required for immediate policy decisions; it is at such times that intelligence can make an effective contribution. There is danger, however, that O/NE may become so involved in immediate problems that it may lose both the time and the capability to plan and execute the kind of fundamental, broad, and authoritative estimate which needs to be made.

3. If there is any rational common denominator of O/NE estimates, it is that they deal with important questions. They have, however, been on different levels of importance and they have not been confined to "intelligence" in the strictest definition of the word. It might be appropriate at this point to develop some kind of definitive classification of our work, if for no other reason than to clarify our own ideas and to provide some kind of intellectual framework into which given suggestions might fall. The following categories of estimates are suggested:

A. Those which involve considerations other than those defined as "intelligence" in the strictest sense:

(1) O/NE has already prepared several "special estimates" of situations not strictly concerned with intelligence questions. There is no reason why this should not be done. By and large, "special estimates" have been and probably should be confined to relatively limited and immediate problems.

(2) O/NE has gotten into difficulties, however, in attempting to prepare estimates

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(for publication in the NIE series) on much broader subjects to which considerations of US operations or capabilities are essential. There are problems, such as those attacked in NIE-13 and NIE-25, in which US policy and US capabilities are so deeply involved that a proper estimate of the capabilities and intentions of other countries cannot be made without reference to them. Some of those difficulties might be avoided if we quite frankly admitted this marriage of necessity, took such papers out of the NIE series and placed them in a new series labeled "Appreciations."

B. Those which fit into the limited scope of "intelligence" in the strict sense. Most of the estimates we have prepared fit into this category, but because of the limits imposed upon intelligence agencies such estimates are definitive for only a short period of time. If one must assume no US policy and no US capabilities, then the time span of prediction must always be a limited one. To project the capabilities and intentions of other governments over an extended period necessitates an estimate on the US side, because the policies of those governments over an extended period will be a function of US policies and capabilities.

C. In addition to the above categories of estimates, there are other types of estimates which are not now and probably should not be within the scope of O/NE's mission. They are:

(1) Estimates on local situations not directly connected with the major problems of US policy.

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- (3) Limited Factual estimates in which more than one agency should participate.
(e.g. what is the Soviet production of high octane gasoline?)

II. BROAD NATIONAL ESTIMATES OR "APPRECIATIONS"

4. O/NE has attempted but two estimates in this field: NIE-13 on prospects for the creation of an adequate Western European Defense, and NIE-25 on Soviet capabilities and intentions during 1951-52. Broad questions have also been touched upon in other estimates but have never been subjected to frontal attack, for example, NIE-10 on China did not examine the fundamental strategic concepts of China and the USSR in the Far East, nor did it go into long-range Chinese capabilities and their impact upon both Chinese-Soviet relations and US security. [] does not explore the [] extended period or examine the fundamental economic and sociological factors which will affect or control [] NIE-26 on the Near East explored on contemporary obstacles to short-term US policies in the Near East; it did not examine the Near East as a factor in US and Soviet strategy as a guide to a permanent policy.

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5. A proper program of estimates in the broad sense should involve (a) the reexamination of all the NIE's written or in process which touch upon but do not answer broad questions, and (b) a review of the problems of US security now and in the future. Once the broad questions have been identified, they then should be broken down into subjects for research and subordinate estimates. These problems for research or subordinate estimates should then be farmed out to the agencies concerned on a successive schedule of deadlines, and they should finally be combined into a broad "appreciation".

6. On Soviet intentions and capabilities the following subjects for preliminary research and conclusions are:

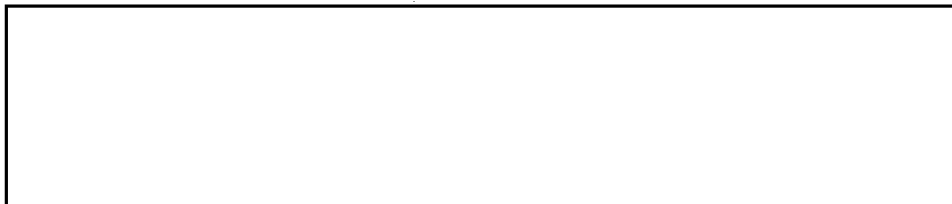
1. Soviet objectives and methods as disclosed by Communist literature.

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2. Soviet behavior in world politics; the individual Soviet objectives sought at each stage in the history of the Bolshevik regime.
3. The Soviet view of the US.
4. Soviet knowledge of US secrets.
5. Soviet decentralization.
6. Soviet stockpiles and strategic reserves.
7. The Soviet Far East; its strategic value and vulnerability.
8. The Soviet atomic energy development program 1951-60.
9. Probable level of Soviet air defense 1951-60.
10. Vulnerability of Soviet and Satellites to unconventional warfare.
11. Strategic implications of a Soviet conquest on Western Europe and Near East.
12. Effect of an assumed level of destruction by strategic bombing upon Soviet capabilities.
13. The Soviet objective in Korea and probable Soviet tactics with regard to continuing or closing out the venture.
14. The development and objectives of Soviet propaganda regarding the US.
15. The Soviet tactics at the Deputy CFM meeting and their significance.



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8. On Western Europe the following subjects are suggested:

1. Strategic value of Western Europe to US and USSR.
2. Probable behavior of West Europeans in event of Soviet conquest.
3. Effect upon Western Europe of the post-war reduction in colonial empires; probable effect of Communist conquests in Far East.
4. Prospects for development of a neutral Germany and its effect upon world power situation.
5. Conditions likely to foster or precipitate neutralism, pro-Sovietism, or pro-Americanism.
6. Long-range political and economic problems; effect of various trends or solutions upon world power situation.

9. A similar breakdown should be developed for the Near East, thus laying the basis for broad appreciations of the USSR, the Far East, Western Europe and the Near East. In addition a broad appreciation should be prepared on Latin America, Africa and the Southwest Pacific-Indian Ocean basin as suppliers of raw materials and markets, as reservoirs of manpower and as allies.

III. STRICTLY "INTELLIGENCE" ESTIMATES OF SHORT-TERM VALIDITY

10. It has already been demonstrated that these short-term estimates must be under continuous revision

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